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HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY

MADE EASY; N

OR A

Guide to CLASSICAL LEARNING:

COMPREHENDING

A Short View of Astronomy, and of the Earth;

WITH

A DESCRIPTION of the principal
HEATHEN FABULOUS DEITIES.

FOR THE USE OF SCHOOLS.

MYTHOLOGY IS THE BASIS OF HISTORY; THE
STANDARD OF CRITICISM; AND THE GUIDE
TO THE STUDIES OF YOUTH. Bryant.

L O N D O N:

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MDCCLXXIX.

HEATHEN MYTHOLOGY

MADE IN A.S.K.

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OF THE CLASSICAL INHERITANCE

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A Short View of the Mythology of the Greeks and Romans

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THE objections which have, with
too much propriety, long been
made by many parents against the History
of the Heathen Fabulous Deities being
put into the hands of young people, as
they stand in *Ovid* and the *Pantheons*, on
account of the many loose exceptionable
passages, laid the author of the subsequent
pages, some time ago, under a restraint of
composing the following short System of

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the Heathen Mythology, in order to assist him in his practice of instructing the young Gentlemen and Ladies intrusted to his care, in the art of reading English Poetry.---This he found himself under an indispensable necessity of doing, on two accounts; the first was, to free his younger pupils from the frequent misconceptions he daily found them under in regard to the Idolatrous Rites, Religious Ceremonies, and Sacrifices of the Ancients, so closely interwoven in almost every page of the Classics. The other reason was, to give them a distinct idea of the principal Heathen Gods and Goddesses, divested of those unseemly circumstances which have rendered their History so improper for the hands of young people; and at the same time to prevent himself, in a great measure, from being under the frequent necessity, in the

course

course of their reading, of either explaining to them *too much*, or, on the other hand, of leaving their curiosities ungratified.

The author presumes little need be said, to prove that many of their Allegories, if properly understood, are equally sublime in expression, and useful in moral application; and that the wise men of former days endeavoured to make the Mythology an assistant to the morals of the people.

In this more enlightened age, it is true, we have no need of such helps: a purer Religion points out to us the way to Morality, and every Virtue may well be constructed on its solid basis.

But though we do not stand in need of such helps, on this account, yet there
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are others on which they are indispensably necessary. In the first place, many of these Fables are connected with Ancient History ; and it is impossible to read even the works of Milton, or Pope, with any degree of satisfaction, without some knowledge of the Mythology of the Ancients. Besides, it is no less necessary for forming a just idea of the works of art. In Painting, Sculpture, and Architecture, the Greeks and Romans were the most eminent Artists. Most of their subjects were founded on those Ancient Fables, and the Moderns are but their Copyists. There is scarcely a Gentleman's gallery or garden which does not owe some of its ornaments to them ; and how ignorant must that person appear, who could not recognize the Gods, Goddesses, Heroes, or Nymphs, so represented. We should, therefore, says a learned writer, read Mythology

thology with this additional view, that we may improve in the works of art, and contribute something in this way to the pleasure of conversation.

By the way, reading, with an eye to conversation, (adds the same ingenious author) is so far from being superfluous or vain, that it is the greatest occasion most people have for education. To be good, needs no deep enquiries into Antiquity: it is the heart, not the hand, which forms the friend of mankind. In a word, Poetry, either ancient or modern, can no more be read with pleasure or advantage, without a knowledge of the Fabulous Deities, than History without some antecedent knowledge of Geography.

And this the author presumes, from his own experience, is better done from

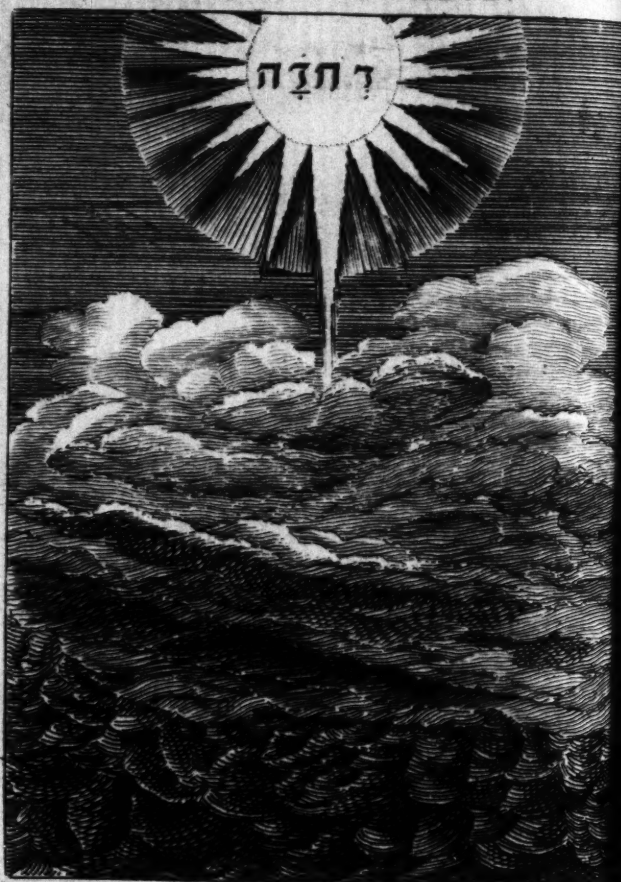
English

English books, than by reading *Ovid* in *Latin*. This consumes much time, and can only be performed by the higher classes; whereas the youngest might soon come to know these amusing fictions, if the several stories were selected from *Ovid* and the *Pantheon*, and related in a style suitable to their capacities.

How far the following sheets may answer the end proposed, the author submits to the judgement and candour of the intelligent Reader to determine.



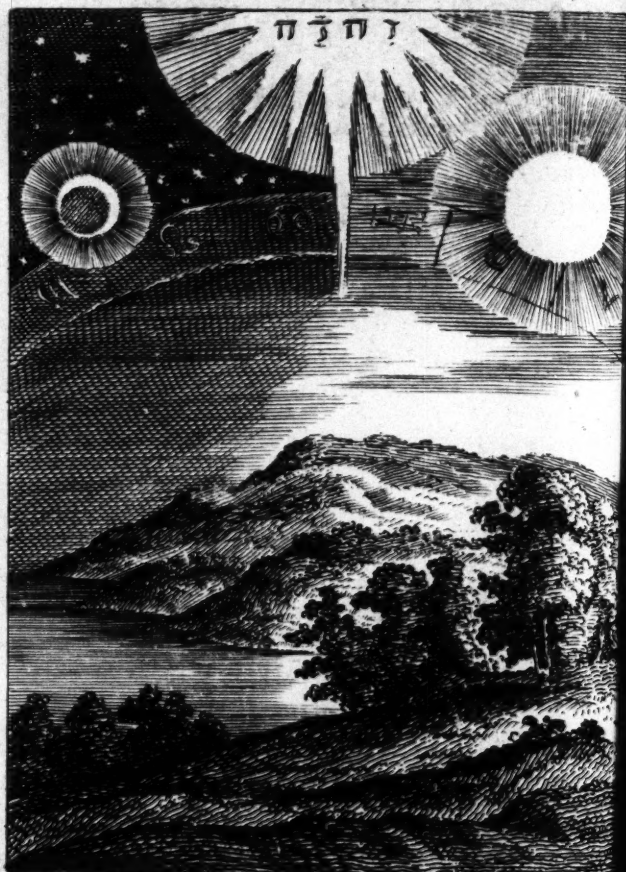
GENESIS CHAP: 1:



*And the Earth was without form
& void; & the Spirit of God moved
upon the face of the waters.*



GENESIS CHAP. I.



*And God said, let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night: and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.
And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night.*

MYTHOLOGY *made* EASY.

CHAP. I.

BEFORE we proceed to the Heathen Mythology, the Fabulous Deities, their names, and manner of worship, we shall take a short view of the Modern Astronomical System, and of the earth we inhabit, with its natural appearance, and of the consequent systems which have been built relative to its original formation, in order to give our youthful readers a general idea of the subject.

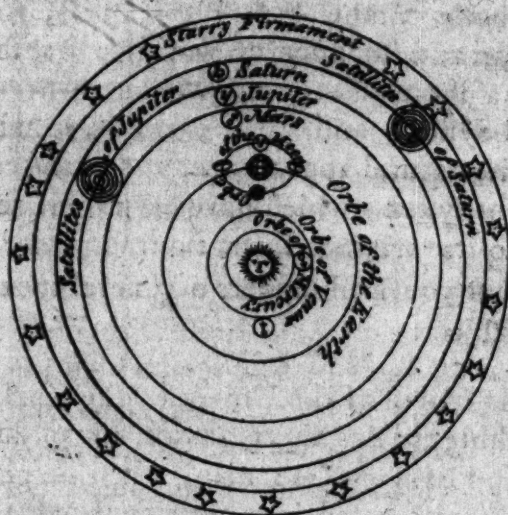
THE system of the Universe (the work of an Almighty Architect) is vast, stupendous, and full of wonders; man, when he gazes upon it with attention, must confess his ignorance, and be lost in wonder and amazement.

THE Earth, which to us appears the centre of this great fabric, is, in effect, but a small part of it, but a speck, as it were, in the vast map of the universe.

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OUR globe, consisting of land and water, is but one of seven planets revolving round the common centre, the Sun, which is an orb of fire placed at the immense distance of 81 millions of miles from us.



This assemblage of worlds, according to Copernicus, our Solar System, consists of the following planets or wandering stars. Mercury, the smallest of the planets, whose orbit is placed below the Earth, is nearest to the sun; Venus, likewise, is below the Earth,

Earth, but farther removed from the Sun; our Earth, which comes next in order, has likewise a Secondary Planet, called the Moon, that revolves round her in one month, at the same time that she follows the Earth in her revolution round the Sun, which is compleated in the space of 365 days and 6 hours.—The planets farther distant from the Sun, and which are therefore called the superior planets, are these; Mars, which is smaller than our Earth, and which has not as yet been discovered to have any Moon; Jupiter, the largest of the planets, which has four Moons; and, lastly, Saturn, which is the most distant of all in our system from the Sun's body, round which he takes no less than 30 years to make one complete revolution. He has five Moons, besides a Ring, which by some is supposed to have been formerly a part of his body, and which, as well as his Moons, puts on a luminous appearance, and contributes, with them, to enlighten the gloomy nights of long and tedious winters.

BEYOND all these, at an immense distance in the trackless fields of Æther, are placed

the fixed stars, whose distance no mortal art could ever trace; but these are considered by philosophers as so many Suns, which probably have planets of their own revolving round them.

HERE it is proper to observe, that all the planets revolving round the Sun, are, in effect, dark and opaque bodies, or other earths, shining only with the light which they receive and reflect from him. This is the case with the Moon, whose different appearances, such as New, Full, Horned, &c. are all owing to her different situations with regard to the Sun, and that at the Full she always rises when he sets, and sets when he rises.

THE Moon, as we said, being a dark body, it follows, that whenever she interferes between us and the Sun, she occasions an Eclipse of the Sun, her shadow falling upon the Earth's body; and whenever the Earth interferes between her and the Sun, the consequence is an Eclipse of the Moon: These Eclipses, which astronomers can exactly calculate, would be still more frequent, were

were it not for the Parallax*, and the apparent irregularity of the Moon's motion.

THE heavenly signs in which he successively appears, are exactly delineated; being divided into twelve equal parts, each of which contain 30 more, answering to the months and days of the year. The following are their names and characters, with the time of the Sun's entering into each particular sign of the Zodiac.

Aries ♈	Taurus. ♉	Gemini. ♊
March 20.	April 20.	May 21.
Cancer. ♋	Leo. ♌	Virgo. ♍
June 22.	July 23.	August 23.
Libra. ♎	Scorpio. ♏	Sagittarius. ♐
Sept. 23.	Oct. 21.	Nov. 22.
Capricornus. ♑	Aquarius. ♒	Pisces. ♓
Dec. 22.	Jan. 20.	Feb. 19.

* The Parallax is the difference between the real place of the Sun, Moon, or Stars, calculated from the centre of the Earth; and the apparent one according to the place on the Earth's surface, whereon the spectator is situated.

With regard to the celestial signs above mentioned, they took their names from different constellations, or groups of stars; but there was not one of them, as the reader will find, to which the ancients had not affixed some particular fable. It is thus that Astronomy is so particularly connected with the Mythology of the Ancients, that it appears scarcely possible to understand the latter, without having some general idea of the former.

Indeed the sacred writings themselves tell us, that the Sun and Stars were created, not only to give light, but for signs and for tokens to mankind. We shall presently see in what manner they really served as such, till artifice on the one hand, and ignorance on the other, contributed to pervert them.

This divine subject is beautifully described by the ingenious Mr. Addison, in the following poem in the Spectator:

The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal sky,
And spangled Heav'ns, a shining frame,
Their great original proclaim:
Th'un-

Th' unweary'd Sun, from day to day,
 Does his Creator's pow'r display,
 And publishes to every land
 The work of an Almighty hand.

Soon as the ev'ning shades prevail,
 The Moon takes up the wondrous tale,
 And nightly, to the list'ning Earth
 Repeats the story of her birth :

Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
 And all the planets in their turn,
 Confirm the tidings as they roll,
 And spread the truth from pole to pole.

What, tho' in solemn silence all
 Move round the dark terrestrial ball ?
 What, tho' nor real voice nor sound
 Amid their radiant orbs be found ?

In reason's car they all rejoice,
 And utter forth a glorious voice,
 For ever singing, as they shine,
 "The hand that made us is Divine."

CHAP II.

*Of the natural Appearance of the EARTH,
and its original Formation.*

HOLY writ informs us, and many testimonies tend to confirm, that this Earth has been in a fluid state. The account of Moses mentions this as having been twice the case: *First*, “When the Earth was without form, and void, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters”. And, *Secondly*, at the time of Noah’s flood, when, for the wickedness of mankind, all the world was drowned.

Now, as to the outward form of the Earth, full of mountains, dales, caverns, rivers, and *unequally* divided by the vast ocean, it has, by some, been supposed to wear the appearance rather of an heap of ruins, than of a world at first delivered out of the forming hands of an All-wise and All-powerful Creator.

It has, moreover, been observed, that sea shells, and the bones of marine animals, have been dug up at such vast distances from the sea, and in so many different places, that it was evident the waters must, at some time, have overflowed the land, though they afterwards receded, leaving those and other marks of their former depredations.

To the first of these observations it has, indeed, been answered, that the supposed irregularities of the Earth are such as produce many conveniencies; that the oceans and rivers are of the greatest benefit to mankind; that the mountains produce the winds, and thereby prevent the air from becoming putrid, like a stagnant lake; with many other benefits which we must be absolutely deprived of if these irregularities did not subsist, which, in fact, being but inconsiderable in themselves, could not be adduced as proofs of any general convulsion of nature.—But the second proof is not so easily to be overturned. On examination we find, in various places, the natural course
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of the strata, or layers of earth, subverted, which would otherwise lie in regular beds, each growing thicker and heavier, as it is deeper deposited in the soil, the whole being generally covered with that soft earth which is commonly called mould, and which is known to be the parent of vegetable, and supporter of animal life.—The mixture of shells and other marine substances, which we have mentioned, adds to this irregularity.—It has been objected, first, that those were not really aquatic productions, but the mere sport of Nature; but, on being closely examined, and being proved to be animal substances, possessing all the qualities of those usually found on the sea-shores, that objection must fall to the ground, It was afterwards suggested, that pilgrims, returning from Jerusalem, might have dispersed them in various countries; but the vast extent of land in which they are in many places found, must immediately silence this conjecture. Even in our own country we find, “that near Reading, in Berkshire, for many succeeding years, a continued body of oyster shells has been found through the whole

whole circumference of five or six acres of land. The foundation of these shells is on hard, rocky chalk; and above this chalk, the oyster shells lie in a bed of green sand, upon a level, as near as possibly can be judged, and about two feet in thickness.— They are here in their natural state, but among the Alps and Pyrenean mountains, and the hills of France and England, they are also found petrified.

FROM these and many other concurring testimonies, it appears that the Earth has been in a fluid state, and that more than once, because, as a modern author observes, trees and other substances have been found buried in beds of shells, a circumstance which must have happened since the Earth was habitable, and which, together with ancient tradition, evidently confirms the account of a General Deluge.

BUT as it was the intent of the inspired writer, in his account of the Creation, and of the Flood, rather to relate facts than to teach people a system of philosophy, so almost

most every one who has written upon these subjects, has thought himself at liberty to form a system of his own. Dr. Burnet, who wrote what he called "The Theory of the Earth," advanced, that this globe, which we inhabit, originating from a fluid chaos, was at first created smooth and plain. The waters were inclosed by the upper, and rested upon the nether earth; so that there was no sea, and the whole was a smooth surface. He observes, that it continued in this form, enjoying a perpetual Spring, till God, who foresaw how men would corrupt their ways, suffered this outward crust of earth to give way, and the fountains of the great deep being broken up, rising to a vast height by the sudden shock, occasioned a General Deluge. Then mountains and seas first appeared; the falling pieces of land caused those inequalities, while the vast body of water, formerly contained in the great abyfs, wrought itself into a channel; and the terraqueous globe put on the appearance which now it wears.—Philosophers, however, are of opinion, that this theory, however curious, cannot

cannot stand the test of reason, and that the Antediluvian earth, such as he has represented it, could not be inhabited by the sons of Adam.

Mr. WHISTON, who was no less famous for his conjectures on this subject, has supposed this earth to have been originally a comet, which being heated and frozen alternately, was a mere chaos; but its orbit being changed, a crust of earth surrounded a central globe of fire; which earth, he says, will last while that fire remains unquenched; and that period, he supposes, will last about 6000 years. Whiston (as well as Burnet) has agreed in the opinion, that the life of men and animals was, at first, extended to ten times what it is found to be at present. But the heat of the central fire increasing Vegetation and Animal Vigour, the philosopher says, that crimes were increased likewise; and all nature teeming with the seeds of life, Man was in effect *too powerful to be innocent*. On this account it was necessary to punish the crimes of mortal beings, and, in consequence, all
living

living creatures were destroyed in one Universal Deluge, the fishes excepted, who, living in a colder element, were not involved in the deserved destruction.

As to Mr. Whiston's Theory of the Deluge, (as he, with other philosophers, knew it would be difficult to account for the quantity of water necessary to overflow the earth) he supposes, that the waters were furnished by a comet, which involving our earth in its tail, a vaporous fluid substance exhaled from it, and increased in proportion as it approached its body; he has even gone so far as to calculate the day of the month and week on which this comet produced such an horrible destruction. But besides many objections which may be made to his Theory of the Creation, and to that central fire, so useless while we receive our heat from the Sun, in a regular revolution round this common centre, it has justly been doubted, even admitting a comet could approach so near to our earth as he supposes, whether the tail of it contains any thing which might prove prejudicial; as it is probably

bably no more than a confluence of thin air, reflecting the Sun's rays in opposition to his body.

BUT Mr. Buffon, a modern philosopher, has advanced a new Theory of his own.—He supposes, that the earth which we inhabit was once actually a part of the Sun, and that it was driven from thence by a comet's falling down upon its body. He is also of opinion, that the earth must have been, at first, less solid than at present; that the sea has wrought the principal changes upon the face of our globe, and was at some time, above the height of our highest mountains; “volcanos, earthquakes, storms, and rain, having made but slight alterations, and only such as have affected the globe to inconsiderable depths.”

Such are the various systems of Philosophers; but these must ever remain uncertain:—After all it is most probable that this terraqueous globe was put perfect out of the hands of the Great Creator; not, perhaps, according to our ideas of *perfection*,
but

but in a figure different from that wherein it now, on comparing accounts, appears, there are evident tokens of an universal deluge, for which, in what manner soever it was first created, the Author of all things, foreseeing man's crimes, had possibly prepared it.—Ruined, however, as it may appear, there is scarcely an irregularity which produces some momentary evil, that is not likewise productive of some good to counterbalance it.—The Earth, even now, is covered with a verdure agreeable to the sight, and, on the whole, properly cultivated, furnishes every thing necessary for the use of man. Every country seems, with its peculiar inconveniencies, to enjoy also its peculiar blessings. Storms are known to clear the air, and even earthquakes may be necessary to change the face of the country. The preservation of this globe, is, of itself, sufficient to convince us, that God did not intend these things for its destruction.

C H A P. III.

M Y T H O L O G Y.

WE all wish to inspire our children primarily with the notion of the Unity of the Deity: it has therefore been made an objection, that an early acquaintance with the Heathen Deities may, in a measure, either counteract that principle, or involve the young mind in a labyrinth of confusion. As to the former part of this objection, it may, perhaps, be sufficiently answered by common experience, which has shewn us, in all ages, that among those who were most attached to the learning of the ancients, not one was ever found in a Christian country, who was so abandoned by reason as to follow their absurd notions of worship.—The latter part of the assertion, however, as it deserves more attention, it will be our business at present to obviate, which we shall do by giving a clear and concise account of the nature and progress of Idolatry among the Ancients, and of the real origin of their boasted Deities.

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IDOLATRY in general seems to have sprung from these principal causes; namely, the respect which people shewed during life, and continued after death to their ancestors, or to certain supposed great men, and the observations on the Heavenly bodies; to which we may add a third cause, which originated in those hieroglyphics used before the invention of letters: there were, however, many other circumstances which took effect rather as subordinate causes to these which we have mentioned above, and which are allowed, by all accurate enquirers into antiquity, to have been the very fountain of the Heathen Mythology.

As to the first of the causes here assigned, we have been told, that the idolatrous custom of paying divine honours to great conquerors, subsisted as early as the age of Nimrod or Belus, the supposed founder of the Assyrian Monarchy, to whom the title of Bel, Baal, &c. (commonly construed to mean no more than *Lord*) have been generally referred. There are others, indeed, who have denied that this title ever really referred to Nimrod, and have endeavoured to

prove,

prove, that the name rather referred to the Sun. But be that matter as it may, it is certain that the practice prevailed very early, and was transmitted from some of the Eastern nations to those of Europe, who infinitely encreased the corruption.

THE observation of the Heavenly bodies was most undoubtedly a great source of Idolatry, especially among those nations that, inhabiting the warm regions and vast plains of Asia, almost perpetually beheld the blazing orb of the Sun over their heads, in the day time, and had the opportunity of viewing the splendor of the stars, in the calm and serene nights of Summer. The former of these might easily seem to be the greatest power of the universe, to those who had lost the knowledge of the true God; the latter, whose course was first studied from necessity, presently took the title of subordinate Deities. Hence Baal, Ashtaroth, &c. to whom, soever originally applied, became the names under which those great luminaries were worshipped.

HAD the stars, indeed, been only separately and distinctly considered, it is probable they would not have contributed so much to the increase of Idolatry as they really did. But very soon after men had begun to observe upon their courses, they found it necessary to divide them into a certain number of classes, partly to prevent confusion in their remarks, and partly to mark the return of the Sun to the different parts of the Heavens, by which the Seasons were generally to be determined.

HENCE the Constellations and signs of the Zodiac, by which the way of the great Luminary was traced through pathless Æther. These took their names in some measure, perhaps, from the fancied resemblance of a number of stars to a certain determinate figure, and in some measure from the productions of the different months, or the character of the season in which the Sun was seen to return to such a particular sign or constellation: thus, with regard to the Tropical signs of Cancer and Capricorn, according to ancient writers on the subject, “the Crab, being an animal that walks backward,

ward, was chosen as a proper emblem of the Sun's declining, or retrograde motion after he enters that sign, which is in the month of June. The Goat, from his climbing, might be considered as an emblem of the Sun's ascending again, after he has entered that sign in December. The Ram, the Bull, and the Kid, might refer to the increase of those animals in the Spring; the Lion signified the Sun's heat and vigour in the Summer; the Virgin, crown'd with ears, denoted the fruitfulness of August; the Balance, the equality of the days and nights in September; the diseases of Autumn were signified by the poisonous Scorpion; and the hunting season by the Centaur or Archer, into which sign the Sun enters in the month of November.

To these constellations were added a number of others, as fable or fancy led; and many of those who had been remarkable for their great actions while living, were received into the temples on earth, at the same time that they were supposed to have augmented the number of the stars of Heaven.

Here some may stop to remark upon the gross ignorance of those who could be prevailed upon to give credit to such an augmentation, since the number of the Cœlestial bodies, as nearly as they could be calculated, has been found to differ little from the Creation to the present time. Where then, it may be asked, was there room for these additional constellations; and how could a Divinity be divided into a number of stars? The matter was indeed absurd; and the question can only be answered by observing, how few, at the times we speak of, understood any thing of Astronomy, and to how small a circle the learning of the ancient world was confined, at least till those days arrived in which the Mythology of the ancients had so far gained ground, that it would have been deemed impiety to doubt of it; and the whole was so connected with the civil government of the people, that the magistrates proceeded to punish capitally such as went about to prove the absurdity of this monstrous scheme of religion which they had adopted.

It was for this that Socrates, one of the
greatest

greatest philosophers of antiquity, was condemned, while, probably, even his judges themselves had a conception of the justness of his opinions, and the rectitude of his intentions; but the Heathens were too far involved in the labyrinth of error to be delivered from it by any thing less than the clue of Divine Revelation.

NEVERTHELESS there were to be found, in all ages, certain persons of clear heads and good hearts; this was, because the traces of truth could never be worn entirely away; and because Religion never left herself entirely without testimony among mankind — These traces, however, were so faint, and so much obscured by the customs and prejudices of mankind, that they bore no more proportion to their original, than the faint glimmering of twilight does to the noon-day sun.

THE hieroglyphics anciently in use before the invention of letters, certainly greatly contributed to form the Mythology of the Heathens. — The observation of the Heavenly bodies had a great share in producing

the principal figures used in these hieroglyphics; many of which, though afterwards supposed to be the figures of Gods, were, in reality, like the signs of the Zodiac, no more than the indications and tokens of the seasons—And thus the god Anubis, who is represented with a dog's head, represented simply that star which rose with the Sun before the commencement of the inundation of the river Nile, to which Egypt owed its boasted fertility.

THE rest of the hieroglyphical marks served to represent matters in common life, and were used instead of writing; but this mode being more difficult to be attained, and less clear in its designment, it was no wonder that it should never become so universal; the convenience, however, which resulted from these works, imperfect as they were, soon caused them to be greatly multiplied in Egypt, which was become the centre of learning and of the arts, as well as of Religion; which latter, however, they first received from the Asiatic nations.

BUT as it was a natural consequence of such symbols, that the more they were multiplied,

tiplied their meaning became the more perplexed, so it naturally followed, that the consequent invention of letters, which probably happened before the time of Cadenus, was soon after embraced by the enlightened nations. It was then that the hieroglyphics became the language of the priests only, and consequently a sacred language: it was then that the vulgar, who had already begun to misunderstand those symbols, totally perverted their meaning, and found out a thousand mysteries in the mere figures of beasts, birds, &c. which had originally been used, either to denote the seasons of the year, or the particular qualities of men and things. Anubis now was no longer a sign, but a deity.—Isis was no longer the symbol of beautiful Nature, but the goddess peculiar to Egypt.—Horus was no longer the emblem of Agriculture, but the son of Isis by Osiris, in whose person the Egyptians seem to have confounded a certain ancient prince of their country, with the grand disposer of nature. The torrent of Idolatry having broken in, a train of absurdities followed, which perhaps the priests themselves could not have suppressed, even had they been willing to act so contra-

ry to their private interests ; so that from these hieroglyphical figures arose, in time, all the monster gods of Egypt, which easily found a place in the warm imaginations of a southern people.

WE have already hinted that the Egyptian religion was antiently derived from the East. We shall find, on enquiry, that the first principles of it bore a resemblance to that of the ancient Persians.—The Osiris of the former answering to the Ormazdes of the latter, who was deemed the grand source of all existence. “ He is (says Zoroaster) the first of all incorruptible beings, eternal and unbegotten ; he is not compounded of parts ; there is nothing equal or like unto him. He is the author of all good, and entirely uninfluenced by passion ; the most excellent of all beings ; the wisest of all intelligent natures ; the father of equity ; the parent of good laws ; self-instructed, self-sufficient, and the first former of nature. To Mythra and Mythras, the two inferior deities of the Persians, Isis and Horus, bore a strong resemblance ; the former were said, by the Orientalists, to be the first emanations

tions of the Divinity, the first of them representing nature, the other a mediating deity, friendly to mankind, who was continually combating the evil principle, whom the Persians named Arimonius, as the Egyptians called him Typhon.

“ORMAZES (said the first magi) produced several beings, all of them spiritual, luminaries, and powerful ; but their chief, Arimonius, had a thought contrary to the light. He doubted, and by doubting he became dark. From hence proceeded all evils, dissensions, malice, and every thing else of a contrary nature to the light. Those two principles made war upon each other, till at last it was concluded, that the lower world should be subject to Arimonius for seven thousand years ; after which time he is to surrender it back to the light.” It may be worth while to compare this with a passage in the Rabbinical writings of the Jews, where the author says, “ The virtue, perfection, and beatitude of Spirits, consisted originally, in continually receiving and rendering back the rays which flowed from the infinite centre, that so there might be

an eternal circulation of light and happiness. Two sorts of spirits, called Zephynts, failed in the observation of this eternal order. The Cherubims, who were of a superior order, did not render back this light, but kept it within themselves, swelled, and became like vessels that are too full; at last they burst in pieces, and their sphere became a gloomy chaos. The Hesperiah (an inferior order) shut their eyes against this light, turning themselves towards sensible objects; they forgot the supreme beatitude of their nature, and took up with the enjoyment of sensual pleasures: they fell, therefore, into mortal bodies.—Souls, adds this author, pass through several revolutions before they return to their primitive state; but after the coming of the Messiah all spirits will be restored to order, and to the happiness which they enjoyed before the sin of our first parent.”

RELIGION, as it originated with mankind in the East, was likely there to have longest retained the traces of its first purity. We have endeavoured to point out the three grand sources of its corruption, which, however,

over, is acknowledged to have been increased by several other subordinate causes, which, from time to time, arose from a depraved race, whose very arts and refinements sometimes contributed to mislead them still farther from the true worship of the great Creator of all things:

POETRY may, doubtless, be considered as one of those; though originally dedicated to the service of true religion and virtue, yet to what absurdities did it not lead men. The abuse of the hieroglyphics already mentioned, would not have been compleated, had it not been for the sweet songs of this syren, which being corrupted, deluded them still farther into error.—Poetry has long assumed a right to change the face of nature, to substitute fiction for truth, and to conduct its reader into a new world, the mere creation of fancy. Even where it conveyed the most important pieces of knowledge in the middle ages, it disguised them so effectually in the veil of fiction, that the *truth* was scarcely to be perceived through the thick covering, even by the most enlightened

ened understanding, while the fiction remained, and was always eagerly embraced by the undiscerning multitude. Poetry then must be allowed to have operated as one of those subordinate causes, which we shall shortly explain more fully, in our reflections on the Grecian Mythology.

In the mean time it may be proper to observe, that the Persian magi, and even the Egyptian priests, meant not, perhaps, at first, to enslave the minds of the people, and to lead them to that gross Idolatry, into which they were at last betrayed.—The misunderstanding of symbols and emblems, and of the figurative style in which religious truths were delivered, seem to have been the chief sources from whence this confusion arose, which afterwards prevailed over the wisest nations of the ancient world.

CERTAIN it is, that the notions of a Paradisaical state, and of a General Deluge, were deeply imprinted on the minds of the Asiatics, and of the ancient Egyptians, and from them, perhaps, communicated to the
Gre-

Grecians. The pure state of the genii, the breaking of the egg of the earth, mentioned by the Persians, confirm this to have been their opinion. The Egyptians had traditions of the like nature; and even the Chinese have distinguished the different states of man before and after the Fall. "All things (say they, corroborating ancient testimony) were then in a happy state; every thing was beautiful, every thing was good; all things were perfect in their kind. In this happy age Heaven and Earth employed all their virtues to embellish nature: There was no jarring in the elements, no inclemency in the air; all things grew without labour, because an universal fertility reigned. The active and passive virtues conspired together, without any opposition, to produce and perfect the universe; whilst this pure state lasted there was neither pain, nor sorrow, nor wickedness."

We find one of these authors expressing himself in the following manner, concerning the world after the Fall. The pillars of Heaven (says he) were broken; the Earth
was

was shaken to its foundation; the Heavens sunk lower towards the North; the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars changed their motions; the Earth fell to pieces; the Waters inclosed within its bosom broke forth with violence, and overflowed it. Man rebelling against Heaven, the System of the Universe was broken.

A CHALDEAN tradition which relates to the General Deluge, is to the following purport; "Chronus (the same with Saturn) appearing to Xisuthrus in a dream, foretold, that at a certain time, a Deluge would destroy the human race, ordering him to write down the origin of the history and end of all things, and then to bury the writing in the earth, in the city of the Sun, called *Sippara*. Afterwards, by the same instruction, he built a ship, two furlongs in breadth, and five in length, which he entered with his relations and friends, birds, and four-footed beasts, with a proper quantity of provisions, and had no sooner shut himself up in it than the Deluge prevailed. During all the time that
the

the waters overflowed the Earth, he floated secure in this vessel : At length, imagining they might have subsided, he dispatched certain fowls, which finding no resting-place, returned. Some time after he sent out others, which returned with mud in their claws ; but the third time he tried the experiment the birds returned no more. His ship then rested on a high mountain : himself, his wife, and daughter, and the pilot coming forth, after having offered sacrifice to Heaven, disappeared. The remainder of the people who had been saved in the vessel, afterwards heard a voice, which declared, that *Xisuthrus* and his companions, for their piety, were translated into Heaven, and numbered with the Gods. The same voice exhorted them to be religious, and to repair to Babylon, after having dug up the writing which this *Xisuthrus* had buried in the city of Sippara."

It would far exceed the bounds which we have prescribed to ourselves, to trace the opinions of all the Eastern nations : the general origin of Idolatry among them may

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be

be pretty well gathered from what has been already recapitulated, and some judgement formed of the degrees by which those people deviated from the religion of the post-diluvian patriarchs.

BUT the *Greeks* appear to have been the grand corrupters of sacred truth.—Filled with the idea of corporeal images, (refined as they professed themselves to be) they seemed to have conceived scarcely any thing that was spiritual. Instead of endeavouring to trace those Fables which they received (as some say by Orpheus) from the ancient Egyptians, they appear to have been industrious in adding to them still more absurdities.—They multiplied amazingly the number of deities; they gave them attributes never thought of before, and many of them quite unbecoming a divine nature. Even their supreme Jupiter, was a being, whose power, highly as they extolled it, was frequently checked by a blind *Fate*, and he was chiefly distinguished by his rage, revenge, and lust. Instead of being the common father of all mankind,
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he was represented as partial to particular cities; sometimes even to individual persons, and that for the most trifling causes. The Gods and Goddeses of the superior order, who sat with him in Synod on particular occasions, partook, as might well be expected, of these "*divine*" imperfections. Even the Goddess of Wisdom, supposed to have sprung by a remarkable birth from the brain of Jupiter, was far from being irreproachable.

The Greeks, indeed, have preserved the traces of the story of the Deluge, though rather in an imperfect manner. They say, that after the Golden Age, and the wars of the giants, a race of wicked men springing up, were all destroyed by a Deluge; the Earth bursting and pouring forth streams, which, together with the rains, laid the whole surface under water. In this general calamity of human kind, Deucalion and Pyrrha alone escaped, who took into a kind of ship or ark, a certain number of the animal creation, which they preserved, floating in their vessel on the face of the

waters, till the Flood was abated; and in them, afterwards, was renewed the human race.

BUT if the Greeks preserved some outlines of a few truths, they introduced into the world a number of fables. Their poets, from Orpheus, dealt scarcely in any thing else: and some of their fictions are so obscure, that it is impossible to trace them with any certainty. Most of these, however, have a moral, and it is on that consideration that they are deserving of attention.

It is to this ingenious people that we owe a System of Theology and Mythology, new in itself, though indeed principally founded upon the Fables of the Ancients. It was in their time, that, not content with adding their illustrious men to the catalogue of gods, the woods, the mountains, and the streams, were said to swarm with deities.—Nor was this all: there was not an extraordinary action performed, but it was immediately attributed to some supernatural

natural cause, or some wonderful metamorphosis. A burning meteor, and a dry season, gave birth to their Phaëton guiding the chariot of Phœbus. Endymion, studying the course of the Heavenly Bodies, was said to have had an amour with the Moon: Amphion, having by exerting his oratory on the subject of good order, reduced a barbarous nation to society, is said to have raised the walls of a city merely by his skill in music. Dædalus, inventing sails, is said to have made himself wings—His son Icarus, probably shipwrecked by his want of skill in managing his vessel, is said to have melted the wax which fastened his pinions, by flying “*too near the Sun*,” though it is evident, that if such a matter were really possible, the *higher* his flight had been, the *cooler* he would have found the surrounding air.—But the *Icarian Sea* took its name from him; and such a circumstance at that time, was sufficient to have confirmed almost any absurdity.

THESE are but a few instances of the extraordinary power which the ancient Greek

Poets, who were in some measure esteemed sacred, assumed to themselves. Greece might, in this respect, not improperly be esteemed the Nurse of Fiction, though the acknowledged encourager of the politer arts.

GREECE, however, most certainly produced not only Poets, but some few Sages and Philosophers: but these latter were ever most respectable, in proportion as they rejected the fiction of the former, and endeavoured to refer to the first principles of things, from which alone reason sought to deduce the origin of truth.

AMONG these, however wild his notions may appear to have been, how much soever they may have been misrepresented in later ages, Pythagoras, the Samian philosopher, deserves to be noticed. He indulged, indeed, the notions of a pre-existent state, and of the Transmigration of Souls: these, some have been inclined to treat as ingenious Allegories; but whatever were the opinions of this philosopher in these matters, his maxims (the few that have been authentically

tically transmitted to us) seem to be well worthy of so great a sage, and such as shew, that the *Man* has not disgraced the *Philosopher*. “As our alienation from God (says that sage, using a fine allegory) and the loss of the wings which used to raise us up to Heavenly things, have thrown us down into the region of death, which is over-run with all manner of evils, so the stripping ourselves of all earthly things, and the revival of our virtues, will make these wings grow again, and raise us up to the Mansions of Life, where pure unmixed good alone is to be found.”

THERE is nothing more plain, than that, from the happy tranquility which the Grecian Poets have generally represented as prevailing in the Golden Age, Peace and Felicity are to be deemed the certain concomitants of Virtue, and that even Nature herself, may, in some measure, be depraved by the depravity of mankind.

EVEN from the fall of Phaëton* we may

* This Allegory or Fable, as well as several others of the Heathen Deities, is very beautifully and judiciously displayed in Choice Emblems for Youth.

learn the mischiefs which attend on boundless rash Ambition : from that of Apollo and Daphne, the reward of Chastity : and from the unhappy end of Leucothoë, the consequence of giving ourselves up to our passions. Narcissus furnishes examples of the punishment of self-love and human vanity ; and the stories of Cyniras and Myrrha, Byblis and Caunus, are instances of the punishment of unlawful love.

THE Romans *adopted*, and *added* to the absurdities of the Grecian Mythology.— This people of themselves, by some not accounted altogether superstitious, yet having laid down a plan of conquering the world, they conceived, that as they had few advantages to offer to the conquered people in return for their freedom, so they could not do better, than in some measure to suit their religious notions to those of almost all the nations of the peopled earth. For this reason, there was scarcely any nation which the Romans conquered, whose Gods they did not adopt, at the same time that they were as little scrupulous of intruding

intruding their own deities upon others; a circumstance, which more than once was urged against them, by such as sought an excuse to shake off their yoke, and perhaps the only circumstance in which the Roman policy, in the early times of the commonwealth, was so defective.

LIBERAL, however, as the notions of the Romans in this respect might appear, they had yet their peculiar superstitions. This great people attended to, and believed in *Augury*: thunder and lightning, the flight of the birds, and even the manner in which the sacred chickens picked up their corn, were observed by this apparently enlightened nation. Even Generals were known to leave their enterprizes, if the augury drawn from these birds proved unfavourable. They were kept in a coop under the care of a particular officer, from which they were released by him, after silence had been solemnly commanded; corn was then thrown on the ground; if they pecked it up eagerly, the omen was auspicious; but if not, it was regarded as a token of ill success. Other birds and beasts, and those even the
lowest

lowest of the animal Creation, were used by the Augurs on the most important occasions.

THE ORACLES were likewise of singular use in maintaining the Deceptions of Heathen Superstition. Whence the notion of these predictions is originally derived, is not exactly agreed. But some have been of opinion, that it owed its rise to the manner in which the Israelites consulted the Divine Being, who answered from the Ark, and from the Holy Place. However that might be, it is most certain that many of the ancient Oracles of the Heathens were, for a long time, in great reputation. Such were the Oracle of Jupiter Ammon, that of Apollo at Delphi, and the speaking Oak, as it was called, at Dodona: The answers of all these Oracles, which were doubtless concerted by the Priests and Priestesses before they were delivered to the enquirers, were always so ambiguous, that it was scarcely possible ever to detect them in an absolute falsity, though the event was frequently contrary to the construction which the

the enquirers put upon the Predictions. These, to render them yet more obscure, were generally delivered in verse, particularly that of Delphi; however, the frequent disappointments of such as consulted these Oracles, at length brought them into disrepute, and about the time of the Birth of JESUS CHRIST, which was in the reign of Augustus Cæsar, they ceased all over the world.

Besides these Oracles, they had recourse to various Divinations, by the inspection of the Beasts Entrails that were sacrificed to their Gods, as also Necromancy, or consulting the dead, and various other absurd and horrid Rites; the Priests, who were generally concerned in the superstition, supporting its credit with all their power.

JUDICIAL Astrology, or judging of events by the Stars, was also much encouraged among the ancients. The Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans, were alike addicted to this abuse of the noble

ble Science of Astronomy, which thus became one of the great pillars of Idolatry among them. To the Sun, Moon, and Stars, they ascribed the power of ruling every thing below. — The Heavens were divided into houses; the Signs were made the Directors of Men, and the Planets under whose reign they drew their first breath, were supposed to influence their lives, and even to fix the period of their existence; and the fate of great empires was imagined to be decided by the Configuration of the Heavenly Bodies. Though nothing could be more absurd than to attribute to those Luminaries the quality of those Signs and Figures into which they had been disposed by Man himself, merely for the convenience of conversation, yet this became one of the grand rules for the study of Astrology. Thus the prince who was born under the sign of Libra, was born to rule his people with Justice; and it was a token of Beauty and Good Fortune to have Gemini for the sign of one's Nativity. The Planets also had their different dispositions, which were generally modelled according to the ideal names assigned them; yet

yet the quality of these was greatly altered by the aspect in which they were found, and the houses they possessed ; and they were said to be *exalted* or *degraded* accordingly.

SUCH idle fancies, which now are generally to be found only among the ignorant, were, in those days of darkness, adopted by people respectable for their learning, as well as situation in life. It was reckoned honourable to be skilled in these Imaginary Sciences, and they constantly maintained their ground among the people on that account.

THE Romans, not contented with the Gods of the Greeks, with those of all the countries which their arms had subdued, and which were generally added to their own ; not satisfied with the Gods of Mountains, Woods, Rivers, and Streams, Naiads, Nereids, Fauns, and Satyrs, had likewise their Lares or Household Gods, and multiplied Divinities so fast, that there was scarcely any thing to be found in common use which had not its peculiar Deity ; in regard

gard of which some of them were particularly superstitious.

THAT people, notwithstanding their admission of Foreign Divinities, always preserved a certain regard for their own, which they conceived to be the immediate guardians of the state: and we find Horace, in his Secular Poem, invoking these tutelary Deities to be favourable to the Roman people. It was under the auspices of these Ideal Beings, that they supposed themselves to conquer in war, or to subsist in peace; no wonder then that they entertained for them so great a degree of veneration.

CHRISTIANITY, at length, spreading in Rome, and in the East, and being favoured by the Emperors, the false Religion vanished before the true. Oracles were silent; Augurs were not consulted; the Temples were neglected; and the Pagan Priests, with all their holy trumpery, deservedly despised.—Yet, while prejudices were not entirely extinguished among the people, there were those who complained of the change

change of Religion, and attributed every piece of ill success which the Roman arms met with, to the forsaking those Gods under whose auspices they said they had conquered, "imploping favour for the Gods of their Country." From this circumstance may be gathered the force of prejudice, even in favour of the most absurd systems, and the great regard of those Heathens for their tutelar Deities.

It will not be denied, however, but that the Romans, as well as the Greeks, had their Sages and Philosophers; and that they had amongst them, from time to time, men who maintained some just notions of the Divine Being, as well as of that rectitude of morals, which the strictest religious doctrines of the Heathens could be said but very imperfectly to inculcate.—Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, are names ever to be remembered among the Greeks, though that people abounded with men who taught in different schools, under the notion of being Philosophers; a circumstance that might easily arise, when men, following their
own

own wild imaginations, it was sufficient to effect a particularity of manners to be esteemed a Philosopher. To enumerate these would have been only a loss of time to the reader; but it may be remarked, that Diogenes, the Cynic, and Zeno, though distinguished from the herd, the latter especially, by some remarkable doctrines, seem to have a right to be included in this censure; while Epicurus, though beautifully illustrated by the Roman Lucretius, will ever be reprobated by the wise for the absurdity of his philosophy. But it would be sufficient for Rome, if the masterly, the elegant Cicero alone were mentioned, who exhibited the doctrines of Socrates and Plato in the most pure and agreeable light, who at the same time taught both Philosophy and Morality, and who has treated of the nature of the Divine Being, recommended in the strongest manner, what must ever be most pleasing in those ages, the duties of a social life.

YET even Socrates, Plato, and Cicero,
 those great lights of the Heathen World,
 were

were neither of them void of Pagan prejudices, nor entirely free from the dreams of dull philosophy. Socrates has been charged with an acquiescence in the Pagan Rites. At the time when he suffered for his opinions, he made mention of the Cock that had been vowed to Æsculapius. The imaginations of Plato hurried him into such conceits as have been termed "The Dreams of that philosopher;" and even Cicero was not without his doubts, for while he speaks of the Attributes of one God, he gives way to them and those of subordinate deities, and, while he favours the system of future rewards and punishments, seems yet dubious whether Pythagoras was not in the right in his Doctrine of the Transmigration of Souls.

Thus it appeared, on all hands, that the Heathen Theology, and its consequent Mythology, derived merely from perversion of the true Religion, had, by degrees, buried the people in all nations in the deepest ignorance, both of Religion and Morality, since though most of their fables, as has al-

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ready been observed, had their particular moral explication, yet they were seldom seen through by the people ; and thus their absurd Idolatry became a perpetual source of most abominable corruptions.

IN order to conclude the whole in a manner suited to the weakest capacity, it may be proper to take a review of what has been said, to reduce it into a short compass, and thereby to sum up, in few words, the progress of the Idolatry of the Heathens.

AFTER the Flood, and the dispersion of nations over the face of the Earth, it appears, that the observation of the Heavenly bodies, the reverence men were led to pay to their Ancestors, and, above all, their abuse of Hieroglyphics, Fable, and Allegory, together with the Imperfection of their own Nature, led them to substitute Symbols for their Originals, and Shadows for Reality. - While this was the case, what could be expected but a perpetual perversion of Truth, which must consequently encrease
more

more and more, in proportion as it was removed from its first fountain.

MEN having established this, their false System, the Heavenly Signs were increased, Kings and Heroes were multiplied, and the number of Deities multiplied with them. Besides the similarity of names, the obscurity of the ancient Eastern Languages concurred to give one man the exploits of another. Thus it often happened, in consequence, that the actions of several persons were united in one deified Hero. Even their Jupiter stood in this predicament; and though reckoned by some to be the supreme God and Father of All, yet the Cretans claimed him as an ancient King of theirs, and even shewed his tomb.

THE invention of man still tending to depravity, increasing arts but increased the evil: Astronomy, Poetry, Painting, and Sculpture, all concurred to confirm men in the error which they had once adopted. Show and pageantry captivated the vulgar,

while the Priests found it their interest to support the deception.

RELIGION, which originally came from the East, was in the East first corrupted, and in Egypt, from whence Idolatry spread all over the Earth.—The Greeks, receiving their Religion from the Egyptians, added amazingly to its abuses, by mistaking or wilfully misrepresenting almost every thing in it, which the people from whom they derived it had yet continued pure; insomuch, that the judgement given upon the dead, a simple ceremony in Egypt, was by the Greeks converted into a representation of what was to happen after death; and thus, instead of the pure ideas of a spiritual Heaven, and a place of punishment for the wicked, their stories of the Elysian Fields, Tartarus, Pluto, Minos, Rhadamanthus, Æacus, Charon, Cerberus, the rivers Lethe, Acheron, Phleghethon, and Styx, which, with a whole train of fabulous accounts of the Lower Regions, were intruded by their poets upon the deluded people.

THE *Religious* Government of Nations being in a great measure interwoven with the *Civil*, contributed to strengthen the growth of Idolatry, which presently grew up to a vast height in Greece, and was not a little promoted by the study of Judicial Astrology, by Oracles, Augury, and Divination; as we have shewn.—Philosophy, though it took various shapes to enlighten mankind, was still so much clogged with private fancies, and had also so many prejudices to combat, that it had not power to remove the evil. Besides, the origin of the true Religion was buried under such a heap of Fiction, that it was almost impossible for any of them to draw it from thence pure and undefiled. Even the most familiar Fables had served to increase Idolatry; and the Romans, who borrowed their Religion and Arts alike from the Greeks, adopted their Gods, and multiplied them. Their Sages and Philosophers proved as unequal to the task of suppressing these errors, as those among the Grecians had been, and

and thus the Theology and Mythology of the Pagans every where prevailed.

It may not, perhaps, be so easy to deduce the rise of Idolatry among the Northern Nations, or those of the New World. However, as to the former it is observable, that as there were not so many causes co-operating to fix and increase it among them, so their worship, such as it is, is generally found more simple in those countries; and that the people, likewise, in the most of them, may generally be traced to the East. The expedition of the great Asiatic Odin, afterwards deified under the title of Woden, is one of the proofs of this fact; the want of records among many of the savage Northern Nations, is perhaps the only obstacle to our tracing them all to a similar origin.

As to the natives of America, as their origin has been disputed, we shall only observe, that till there is proof positive to the contrary, we may be allowed to suppose them the descendants of Noah and his family.

mily. At what time they emigrated from the great continent we shall not go about to prove; but of them, as well as of the Northern Nations, we shall observe, that their worship, such as it was when the Spaniards found them, was rather simple than complicated, and chiefly consisted in that primary source of Idolatry, namely, the adoration of the Sun.

ON the whole it will appear, if we attend to every circumstance, that mankind became corrupted in manners, in proportion as they departed from the worship of the One True God; but nevertheless; that *wherever Records were preserved, wherever political and religious Institutions prevailed*, there were always some traces of this true Religion to be found, as well as of the history of the Creation, the Fall, the Deluge, the Restoration of all Things, and several other remarkable Truths mentioned in the Sacred Writings; though these are frequently confounded, and covered with the veil of Fiction.—Whoever reads the book of Genesis, and the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,
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will easily perceive the similarity between them. Moses says, the Earth was without form and void :”—Ovid begins thus,

“Before the Seas, before the Earth was made,

“Or Heav’n, which covers all things, was display’d,

“One universal face all Nature wore,

“And the rude mass the name of Chaos bore.”

THE subsequent descriptions of the Golden Age, the Wars of the Giants, Deucalion’s Flood, &c. all borrowed from the Egyptian and Eastern learning, may be easily traced back to their source, even without supposing the poet to have seen the sacred Writings. The conformity in many other circumstances, which has been mentioned in the former part of this treatise, there is no need here to repeat. It seems plain, that all mankind derived their knowledge, as well as their religion, from one pure fountain, the source the Worship of the True God, and an acquaintance with the history of the Patriarchs.

IDOLATRY,

IDO-LATRY, however, being once introduced in the world, it was a most difficult matter to exterminate it ; perhaps the more so, as the generality of the Heathen Fables had been founded on truths misapplied. This grand reformation was reserved for the Christian Religion to accomplish. The nations remained in gross darkness till that light from Heaven dawned upon them ; then it was that all the shadow of night vanished.

“ Gods sunk to dust, and Oracles were dumb.”

The pure Religion, preserved only among the Jews, and there loaded with ceremonies, was restored by him who was to restore all things, while the morality adopted by the great Author of Christianity, tended to confirm the truth of his Mission, and to establish that System of Religion which has served to enlighten, as well as to bless mankind.

CHAP.

CH A P IV.

*History of the HEATHEN GODS and
GODDESSES.*

WE have already mentioned how the Superstition of the Ancients converted Men, and even part of the Brute Creation into Gods, whose attributes were uncertain, and always far beneath the ideas which rational creatures might be supposed to form of a Superior Being. In process of time, their Gods, and the stories told of them, became so numerous, that it was impossible, in many cases, to trace the origin of their Fables. We shall, however, describe their principal Fabulous Deities, as spoken of by the most celebrated writers of antiquity, which we shall arrange according to the rank they held as superior or Heavenly Gods; those of the Sea, Earth, and the Infernal Regions; the chief merit of which consists in the excellent morals contained under their Allegorical Representations.

C E L U S

CÆLUS AND TERRA.

ACCORDING to the ideas of the Greeks, who seem to have been the grand corrupters of the Mythology, which they borrowed of the Eastern Nations, Cælus [Cælum] and Terra, the Heavens and the Earth, were the grand Progenitors of Gods as well as Men. The latter was also termed Vesta and Cybele. Thus the gross notions of the Greeks led them not only to adore the Heavens, but the very Soil they trod on, only because it contributed to support them.

SATURN.

NEXT in the order of the superior Gods, we find Saturn. He is said to have devoured his children because it was in the Fates that one of them should usurp his dominions. Various have been the conjectures formed relative to the meaning of this Allegory. It is generally supposed, that by Saturn was meant Time, who constantly devours his children. In Sa-
turn's

turn's reign was what the poets called the Silver Age.—Saturn is the name given by Astronomers to the seventh, and outermost Planet.

J U P I T E R.

WHEN Saturn had determined to devour his children, his wife having brought forth Jupiter, gave her husband a stone to swallow instead of the infant God, who was afterwards supplied with milk by a goat, and delivered to the Corybantes to be nursed, the sound of whose hammers prevented Saturn from hearing his cries. Being come to years of maturity, he deposed his father, and married his sister Juno. His throne was afterwards shaken by the Earth-born Giants, called Titans, among whom was one, who, from an hundred hands at once discharged an hundred mountains at the Heavens. Jupiter, however, triumphed over these Giants, and established his reign, sharing the universe with his brothers, Neptune and Pluto, the former of whom governed the Sea, the latter the Infernal Regions. Jupiter is also called Saturnius, from

from his father. He is said to have been a King of Crete, where his tomb was shewn at the very time when he was worshipped as a God, under various titles, by the Greeks and Romans. His Arms were Thunder, and his Symbol was an Eagle. Jupiter is the sixth Planet in the Solar System. The unlimited power ascribed to this God, was a faint shadow of that which we justly ascribe to the Supreme Being.

A P O L L O.

APOLLO, or PHŒBUS, was the God of Day, of Verse, of Physic, the Promoter of Arts, and the Patron of the Muses. He was the son of Jupiter and Juno. In a figurative sense, the God of Genius might well be called the God of Light, since to illuminate the mind is an attribute worthy of the most enlightened being. By Apollo is understood the Sun. He is also called Sminthius.

M A R S.

MARS was the son of Juno, and the
God

God of Battles. He is represented in armour, and considered as an universal destroyer. His Symbol is a Cock, representing the Vigilance necessary in War. He was not so remarkable for any thing as for his intrigues with Venus, the Goddess of Beauty. Mars is the fifth Planet in the Solar System.

M E R C U R Y.

THIS God was the son of Jupiter and Maia. He was called Hermes, and under that name known to the Egyptians and Greeks. He was the Patron of Eloquence, Arts, and Trade; and sometimes considered also as the Patron of Thieves. He was the Messenger of the Gods. It was he that conducted the Souls of the Departed to the Realms of Pluto. His actions were as various as extraordinary. He stole the flocks and lyre of Apollo, and with the latter charmed the watchful Argus to sleep, who had an hundred eyes, and was appointed by Juno to watch Iö, whom that Goddess had changed into a Cow. He fastened

Pro-

Prometheus to the rock of Caucasus, to which the latter was condemned for having stolen Fire from Heaven. In effect, he was ready and dexterous at every thing he undertook. The best qualities of Mercury are as desirable as the others are detestable. The Improvement of useful Arts must ever be considered as a blessing to mankind.

C U P I D.

THIS God, who presided over Love and Pleasures, is represented sometimes as a naked boy with a fillet over his eyes, to indicate that Love is blind; a Bow in his hand, and a Quiver on his shoulders. He has also a torch in his hand.—The opposite qualities ascribed to this God are the just indications of the different consequences attending on a Virtuous Love, and an immoderate or Vicious Passion.

H Y M E N.

HE was the son of Apollo and Urania, and is represented under the Figure of a
young

young man crowned with roses, and holding a torch in his hand. As the God of Marriage he is properly an attendant on Cupid, to shew that Wedlock is the end of honourable Love.

J A N U S.

JANUS is represented as the God of the Year, from whence the first month takes its name. He was also considered as regulating Peace and War, his temple being shut in time of Peace. He is supposed to have been a Prince of Italy. His Image is represented with two Faces, having a staff of white thorn in one hand, and a key in the other. This may teach an useful lesson of reflecting on the past, and preparing for future events.

B A C C H U S.

BACCHUS, or IACCHUS, was the son of Jupiter and Semele. His mother having made Jupiter swear to come to her in all his glory, his lightnings consumed her, but Jupiter

Jupiter saved the child. When he was grown up he became a great Conqueror, and a Patron of the Vine, (some say the first planter) in whose juice he much delighted. Bacchus is supposed to have been a great Prince and Lawgiver, who might possibly have taught the use of Wines, without the abuse of them. His rites were, however, performed by shameless drunken men and women, whose extravagancies, one would have thought, might have been sufficient to make the rest of mankind for ever reprobate the crime of Drunkenness.

VULCAN.

VULCAN was the son of Jupiter and Juno, and the husband of Venus. He was very disagreeable in his person. It is said he forged Thunder for Jupiter, for which he was called the Smith of the Gods, and the God of Smiths. His fabled life was in general a pattern for Industry.

ÆSCULAPIUS.

HE was the son of Apollo and the Nymph
F Coronis.

Coronis. He was the God of Physic, and, as some say, was worshipped in the shape of a Serpent.

M O M U S.

MOMUS was the son of Somnus and Nox, remarkable for nothing but finding Fault with Gods and Men.

J U N O.

THIS supreme of all the Goddesses was the sister and the wife of Jupiter, or Jove, of whom she was continually jealous. It was on her approach that Jupiter turned Iö into a Cow; to escape her eyes; but she continued to torment the object of her hate, till Mercury slew Argus, and Iö escaping into Egypt, was there consecrated a Goddess, and married Osiris, who is also considered as the principal God of the Egyptians.—An Ox is also one of their Deities, who is called Apis. Juno was thus often embroiled with Jupiter, yet she kept her state, and sometimes reconciled herself to him.

him by the means of Venus. The former was the Goddess of Wedlock, which is best supported by Love. Her Symbol is a Peacock, into whose tail she is said to have inserted the hundred eyes of Argus. She is also called Saturnia.

M I N E R V A.

THIS Goddess sprang immediately from the head of Jove. She was the power that presided over Arts and Arms, and, by her prudence, directed the management of War. She was also called Pallas and Athene, and was said to have named the city of Athens. Having contended with Neptune for that honour, the former striking the ground with his Trident, produced a Horse; the latter caused an Olive to spring out of the earth; and therefore the contest was determined in her favour. On her shield is the Gorgon's head with snaky locks, the sight of which was so terrible, as to turn men into stone. Minerva was an imperfect representation of the Divine Wisdom.

VENUS.

VENUS was the daughter of Oceanus, and is generally said to have sprung from the Froth of the Sea; though some affirmed her to be the daughter of Jupiter and Dione. She was received into Heaven, and was esteemed the Goddess of Love, Beauty, and Pleasure; the Graces, and the Winged Hours, were her attendants; and she is repeatedly called the Delight of Gods and Men. Notwithstanding all this, Juno persuaded her to marry Vulcan, the most deformed of all the Gods. She was the mother of Æneas, by Anchises, a Trojan prince, and the great patroness of Paris, to whom she promised the beautiful Helen, on the following occasion: The Goddess Discord (who surely ill deserved that name) having produced an Apple which was inscribed "To the Fairest;" Juno, Pallas, and Venus, contending for the prize, referred the dispute to Paris, the son of Priam, king of Troy; but who then kept sheep on Mount Ida. Juno promised him Power; Pallas, Wisdom;

Wisdom; and Venus, Beauty; to bribe him to give a favourable opinion. He decided for Venus; and afterwards sailing to Sparta, by the help of that Goddess, seduced Helen, the wife of Menelaüs, in the absence of that prince. For this the Spartan moved all Greece to assist him, who entering into a league, fitted out a formidable fleet and army, and sailed to Troy, which they took after a siege of ten years, and utterly destroyed. The Chiefs of the Greeks embarked on this expedition, were Agamemnon, the commander; his brother Menelaüs, Achilles, Patroclus, Diomedes, Ajax, Telamon, Oileus, Ulysses, Nestor, Idomeneus, Merion, Triptolemus, and Thoas the son of Andräemon; on the Trojan side, were Hector, Paris, Helenus, Deiphobus, Polydamas the Augur, and the rest of Priam's sons, with Antenor, Æneas the son of Anchises, Memnon, Sarpedon, with Glaucus, and the forces of the Lycian nation. Hector was slain by Achilles during the course of the war; and the latter fell by Paris. Æneas was the only chief of note who survived the ruin of Troy, and, according to some,

Founded a kingdom in Italy. From this ancestry the Romans pretended to trace their descent. Venus, who had been necessary to this war, often supported the Trojans, and was said to have been wounded in defending her son Aeneas from the attacks of Diomedes. This Goddess was likewise enamoured of Adonis, whom Mars, her lover, in revenge, caused to be killed by a boar. After all, in this as well as in many other cases, there appear to have been more than one to whom this name was ascribed. Venus had many temples erected to her; but was particularly venerated in the isles of Cyprus and Paphos, from which circumstance she derived the name of the Cyprian, or Paphian Goddess. She is represented in a chariot drawn by Doves, or Swans. Cupid, who is winged and blind, and Hymen, the God of Marriage, holding a flaming torch in his hand, are her proper attendants.

L A T O N A.

THIS Goddess was the mother of Apollo
and

and Diana, by Jupiter; but Juno caused her to be pursued by the Serpent Python, and Earth refusing her a resting place, she brought forth these Cœlestial Beings on the floating island of Delos, which Neptune raised out of the sea for that purpose. She caused the seven sons and seven daughters of Niobe to be slain by Apollo and Diana, for slighting her sacrifices, and despising her person; and the queen herself was changed into marble, which weeps perpetually for her impiety and misfortunes.

D I A N A.

SHE was the daughter of Jupiter and Latona, and generally esteemed the Goddess of Hunting; but as she had a threefold title, was the sister of Apollo, and in one of her characters represented Phœbe, Cynthia, or the Moon, she is ranked among the Cœlestial Goddesses. She turned Actæon into a Stag, and caused him to be devoured by his own hounds, for having looked at her when she was bathing. She was looked upon as the Patroness of Chastity, and had

a beautiful temple at Ephesus, which was burnt by a Grecian youth, with a view of perpetuating his name to posterity.

A U R O R A.

THIS Goddess presided over the Morning. She married Tython, who was changed into a Grasshopper, and is said to have been in love with the Grecian Cephalus, who, however, loved his wife Procris too well to admit of her caresses. Procris afterwards made her husband a present of a dart, which was unerring. Cephalus being one day gone into the woods, his wife, moved by jealousy, followed him, and hid herself, when he, observing something to stir in a thicket, immediately threw his dart, and unfortunately killed his wife. She had a son named Memnon, who was slain by Achilles at the siege of Troy.

C E R E S.

THIS Goddess was the daughter of Saturn and Ops, and was the first that encouraged

couraged Agriculture. She had the tuition of King Elufius, who was called Triptolemus, to whom, when of age, she gave a chariot drawn by dragons, from which he scattered Corn upon the Earth, diffusing blessings as he rode along. She had several Temples; but her name was most remarked for certain mysterious Rites performed in her honour, at which only women were permitted to assist.

H E B E.

HEBE was the Cup-bearer of the Gods, but having made an unfortunate slip in the presence of Jupiter, he dismissed her, and having taken Ganymede, the son of Troas, king of Troy, made him Cup-bearer in her stead. Hebe was the Goddess of Youth.

N O X.

NOX, or NIGHT, was the daughter of Coelus and Terra, and married to Erebus, or, as some say, to Somnus; however, she had several children, the most implacable of

of whom was Mors, or Death; Morpheus also, the God of Dreams, was an attendant in her train. She was generally painted in a black robe, beset with stars, and accounted one of the most ancient of the Deities.

THE MUSES.

THESE were the Goddesses of Arts and Sciences, History, Music, and Poetry; they were Nine in number; namely, Urania, Calliope, Clio, Erato, Euterpe, Melpomene, Polyhymnia, Terpsichore, and Thalia. To them the Palm Tree and the Laurel were reckoned sacred, as also the Castalian Fountain. They generally inhabited Mount Parnassus, where the flying horse, Pegasus, was said to be kept near them. The Muses were beloved by Minerva, and always found in the train of Apollo. Those who desire to learn what is most useful and respectable, will always be found admirers of the Muses.

THE GRACES.

THESE are the three Handmaids of Venus; Aglaia, who endues the Mind with Virtue;

Virtue; Thalia, who infuses Gratitude; and Euphrosyne, who Enlivens the Heart with Chearfulness. Those who would wish to please, must be attentive to the Graces.

NEPTUNE.

NEPTUNE was the son of Saturn, and brother of Jupiter, to whom fell the empire of the Seas. Being driven out of Jove's presence, together with Apollo, he assisted that God in building the walls of Troy, in the reign of Laomedon; but the king defrauding both of their promised reward, the former sent a sea monster, which did great mischief on the coasts. This monster, which was to devour the king's daughter, was destroyed by Hercules; but Laomedon using him in the same manner, that hero overturned the walls which the Gods Neptune and Apollo had raised.—Neptune is described as commanding the Tritons, and all the Sea and River Gods. He is represented sitting on a car in form of a Shell, drawn by Sea Horses, and with a Trident in his

his hand. The great power ascribed to him sufficiently expresses the danger of those who trust themselves to the Ocean.

NELEUS.

NELEUS was the son of Neptune, who had twelve sons by the Nymph Chlora, all of whom were destroyed by Hercules, except Nestor, who was absent. The latter, who was at the siege of Troy, was said to have lived three ages, by which was understood 300 years.—It is probable, however, that he was born at the end of one age, lived another, and saw the beginning of the third, in which case he might, perhaps, be 120 years old. The Nereids, or Sea Nymphs, were in the train of Neleus.

PROTEUS.

PROTEUS was the son of Oceanus and Thetis, and had the peculiar gift of varying his shape at pleasure.

ÆOLUS.

ÆOLUS.

ÆOLUS was supposed to be the son of Jupiter, and the God of the Winds, who were all at his command.—Boreas, Eurus, Austers, Zephyrus, and the rest, were subject to him. In effect, he was king of the island Æolia, and a great Astronomer.

THETIS.

THETIS was generally taken for the Goddess of the Sea, and daughter of Neptune.—She was the wife of Peleus, king of Thessaly, and mother of Achilles, who was also called Pelides. Her nuptials were celebrated by all the Gods. Some say she made her son Achilles invulnerable in every part but the heel, by dipping him in the river Styx; but Homer says nothing of the matter. However that was, this hero was long concealed in women's cloaths, till Ulysses found him out, and took him to the famous siege of Troy, where it was written in the Fates that he should fall.—Quarrel-
ing

ling with Agamemnon in the last year of the siege, he withdrew his aid, and Thetis prevailed on Jupiter to deny success to the Greeks, till the offence of Agamemnon in taking away his captive, Briseis, was atoned. At length, when the Trojans had begun firing the Grecian fleet, Achilles sent his friend Patroclus, with the Myrmidons, to their assistance.—But Patroclus being slain by Hector, this Hero himself took the field, and Hector fell by his arm.—Achilles afterwards fell by the hand of Paris; and, after his death, Ulysses and Ajax contending for his armour, the latter, losing his cause, slew himself. Thetis is frequently taken for the Sea itself.

It is here to be noticed, that there was scarcely a Constellation in the Heavens, to the history of which the ancients had not annexed some fable. The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, which we shall instance, may prove a sufficient example.

A R I E S, The RAM.

THIS Animal is said to have carried Ve-

rus

rus and Cupid, for which he was rewarded with a Golden Fleece, and advanced to the Cœlestial Regions.

T A U R U S, The Bull.

THIS is the Animal in whose shape Jupiter deceived Europa, the daughter of Agenor, king of Thebes, and thus gave the name of Europe to one Quarter of the World.—The Fable seems to intimate, that Europa was carried off in a vessel which had a Bull painted on its head.

G E M I N I, The Twins.

THESE were Castor and Pollux.

C A N C E R, The Crab.

THIS was the Crab sent by Juno to embarrass Hercules while he was killing the Hydra. The son of Jupiter crushed him under his foot, but Juno advanced him to Heaven.

LEO,

LEO, The LION.

THIS was the Lion slain by Hercules, after a strong contest, in the forest of Nemea.

VIRGO, The VIRGIN.

THIS Virgin was Astræa, the Goddess of Truth and Innocence.

LIBRA, The BALANCE.

SUPPOSED to be the Balance of Themis, the Goddess of Justice ; in which, likewise, Jupiter weighs the lot of human kind.

SCORPIO, The SCORPION.

THIS was a youth transformed into that hideous shape, but afterwards placed among the Cœlestial Signs.

SAGITTARIUS, The CENTAUR or ARCHER.

THIS was Chiron, the Centaur, who was the tutor of Achilles.—The people called Centaurs, were a nation of Thessaly, remarkable for taming bulls and breaking horses.

horses. On account of the latter they were supposed to be half Men and half Horses. They were, in general, good Archers. Theseus almost exterminated this nation in a drunken quarrel, at the wedding of Pirithöus.

CAPRICORN, The Goat.

THIS was supposed to be the Goat, whose milk furnished Jove with a subsistence when he was obliged to be concealed from his father Saturn.

AQUARIUS, The Water-Bearer.

HE serves the Gods with Nectar, and scatters Rain, and sheds Dew upon the Earth.

PISCES, The Fishes.

THESE were exalted to Heaven for carrying Venus and Cupid away from the giant Typhon.

AFTER

After having taken notice of the Celestial Powers, and Sea Gods, it is proper, before we descend to the Infernal Regions, that we should take some notice of the Gods and Demi-Gods of the Earth, most of whom were Heroes, or great Princes. The whole catalogue is so numerous, that it would overburthen the reader's memory; we shall, therefore, select the most remarkable, and begin with

HERCULES.

HE was the son of Jupiter and Alcmena. Archippe, the wife of Sthenelus, king of Mycene, being pregnant at the same time, it was in the Fates, that the child which was first brought into the world, should command the other. Juno contriving that Archippe should be first delivered, her son Eurystheus had the command of Hercules; and this prince enjoined him such Labours as served to shew his remarkable Strength and Valour, which, indeed, he had given early

early tokens of by strangling two Serpents, when he was an infant in his cradle.—He slew the monster, Hydra, (whose heads sprouted as fast as they were cut off) in the fens of Lerna.—He hunted, and killed, a Hind with golden horns and brazen feet.—He strangled a Lion in the forest of Nemea, whose skin he afterwards wore as a garment. He punished a king of Thrace, who fed his horses with human flesh.—He took the Wild Boar of Erymanthus, and led him to Eurytheus.—He killed the horrible Birds which were called Stymphalides, and had claws of iron.—He tamed a Wild Bull that desolated Crete.—He vanquished the River God Achelöus, who had the privilege of changing his form; and when he took that of a Bull, wrenched off one of his horns, which afterwards became the Horn of Plenty*.—He wrestled with the giant Antöeus,

* Probably he turned the course of the river Achelous, and, by cutting off one of its streams, which he directed in a more proper channel, fertilised the country.—Some have doubted whether such a man as Hercules ever existed; it is most likely that (besides many fabulous Stories) the Actions of several have been attributed to this favourite Hero.

and finding him rise more vigorous from every fall, at last held him up in the air, and stifled this formidable adversary in his arms.—He gathered the Golden Apples in the garden of Hesperides, after having killed the watchful Dragon that guarded them.—Relieving Atlas, who is said to bear the Heavens on his Shoulders, Hercules supported the weight for twenty-four hours. He slew Geryon, Cacus, and other Monsters (or Robbers).—He overcame the Centaurs; and cleansed in one day the Augean Stables, in which 1000 oxen had dunged for 1000 years. This he did by turning a stream of water through them.—He killed the Sea Monster which was to have devoured Hesione, and afterwards took Troy, and gave Hesione to Telamon, the father of Ajax.—He defeated the Amazons, and gave their Queen Hypolita to Theseus.—He descended into the Infernal Regions, and dragged the three-headed dog Cerberus up to the Regions of Light.—He slew the Vulture that devoured the Liver of Prometheus; and, having divided two Mountains that obstructed the passage from the Western to the Mediterranean

raean Sea, set up two Pillars near Gibraltar, on which he inscribed "*Ne plus ultra* ; You can go no farther ;" as he then conceived himself to be at the end of the world. In his youth, Pleasure and Virtue appearing before him in human shapes, he rejected the former and chose the latter. However, in his more advanced age, he became the dupe of Females, and actually spun in women's apparel, to please the Lydian Princess, Omphale. Having slain the Centaur Nessus, with an arrow poisoned by the blood of the Hydra, the dying monster gave Dejanira (Hercules's wife) his skin, as a preservative for love.—This Dejanira sent him to regain his affections. The hero had no sooner put it on, than he was seized with violent and incurable pains ; therefore, building a funeral pile on Mount Ætna, he set fire to it, and expired. His spirit was received into Heaven, where he married Hebe, and Temples were built to him on Earth, by his father Jupiter.—The first part of this Hero's life is a model of Virtue.—The latter shews the frailty of mankind.

THESEUS.

THIS Hero was the son of Ægeus, king of Athens, and was the great imitator of Hercules. However, he was not without his faults. He was the first that ran away with Helen; whom he afterwards restored. One of his greatest actions was vanquishing the Monster, son of Minos, king of Crete, called the Minotaur, who was reported to be half a Bull and half a Man, by the help of Ariadne, the king's daughter, whom he afterwards forsook.—Forgetting to change his sails on his return, the expected signal of his success, his father Ægeus, thinking him slain, threw himself into the sea, which still bears his name.—His last wife was Phædra, by whom he had Hypolitus, whom he sought to put to death, on an accusation of his step-mother, which proved false; but the Prince endeavouring to escape being thrown from his chariot, was killed.—The fable says, Æsculapius restored him to life, and he went into Italy. Theseus descended to the infernal Regions, where he was detained by Pluto, but was released by Hercules.

cles.—After meeting with various changes of fortune, he died at Athens; and a temple was erected to his memory.

J A S O N

J A S O N was the son of Æson, king of Thessaly. He was brought up under Chiron the Centaur, who was famous for his arts and learning. This hero sailed in the first large ship we hear of in the world, (called Argo) to fetch the Golden Fleece from Colchis; i. e. to establish a gainful trade there. He is said to have killed a Dragon that guarded the Fleece, with the assistance of Medea, who, being an Enchantress, is said to have restored old Æson to Youth, and to have done many extraordinary things; but at length, either on account of her ill practices, or because he was tired of her, Jason left her, and married Creusa, when, in a fit of phrenzy, she slew the children she had by him, poisoned the family, and set the palace in flames; after which she fled in a chariot, drawn by dragons, which was provided for her by the

Sun, her father.—Jason at length reigned,
and died peaceably at Colchis.

CASTOR AND POLLUX.

CASTOR and POLLUX were the Twin Brothers of Helen and Clytemnestra. They followed Jason to Colchis. These heroes were so much attached to each other, as friends as well as brothers, that they were never asunder. They were distinguished for heroic actions, and (probably for clearing the seas of pirates) were deified. Jupiter having bestowed immortality on Pollux, Castor shared it with him, so that they lived and died alternately: at last they were both taken up into Heaven, and, metamorphosed into Stars, formed the Constellation called Gemini.

CIRCE.

CIRCE was generally said to be the daughter of the Sun. She changed Ulysses' companions, who drank of her poisoned cup, into Swine.—She seems to have been a Queen of the Sarmotes, who poisoned her husband in order to reign alone.—Ulysses refusing

refusing her draught, furnishes a good example to us to refuse the poisoned cup of guilty pleasure. Circe was a sorceress like Medæa, already mentioned. Probably both were acquainted with the secrets of nature.

CALYPSO.

THIS was an Earth-born Goddess, who detained Ulysses for a long time on his twenty years voyage, after the destruction of Tröy.

JUTURNA.

JUTURNA was the daughter of Daunus, and changed into a nymph by Jupiter. When Æneas left burning Tröy, after having spent some time with Dido, or Elisa, queen of Carthage, he came into Italy, and was directed by Auguries to fix his residence at Latium, where he demanded Lavinia, the daughter of king Latinus; but Turnus, who courted her, inciting the Latins to arm in defence of his cause, several battles were fought, and at length Turnus was slain by the conquering arms of the Trojan Prince, after

after Juturna, his sister, had done every thing in her power to defend him. The whole story of Aeneas's settling in Italy is disputed by some authors.

It is to be noted, that the Ancients were so fruitful in multiplying Gods and Goddesses, that their woods were supposed to be full of them.—Pan, Silenus, Vertumnus, Priapus, Flora, Pomona, Nymphs, with the Dryads and Hamadryads, were supposed to inhabit these; while the Rivers and Lakes had their peculiar Deities, and Nymphs or Naiads, some of whom were metamorphosed into Divinities, whilst others retained the power of changing their forms at pleasure. The Pagans had also their Lares, or Household Gods, whose Images were generally placed upon the Hearth, and honoured with an Altar.

PLUTO.

THIS tremendous power was said to be the God of Riches, the son of Ceres, and the Ruler of the shades below.—The Elyfian Fields,

Fields, where the good were rewarded, and Tartarus, where the wicked were punished, were both alike under his dominion. The entrance to those Mansions was guarded by a Dog with three heads, that was called Cerberus; who, instead of Hairs, was covered with Snakes. Here were found, Fear, Terror, Gorgon, Demogorgon, and all the Monsters that could affright mortals. The river Lethe, (of Forgetfulness), Acheron, of Sorrow, and the flaming Phlegethon, belonged to those dreary Territories, which the nine streams of Styx surrounded, and prevented the return of those souls, whom Charon, the Ferryman of Souls, wafted over hither, where they were judged by Rhadamanthus, Minos, and Æacus, who decreed according to their merits. To their judgement all were supposed to be subject, except such as were received into the Assembly of the Gods.—The substance of this fable appears to have been calculated to give men, in those days, some ideas of future rewards and punishments. When Pluto visited mankind, he walked lame, but on his departure, took wings and flew away. A just picture of the instability of Riches.

THE

THE FURIES.

THESE were Infernal Deities who tormented the wicked in Tartarus, and were sometimes sent to plant their Snakes in the bosoms of the guilty on earth.—Let those who have abandoned the paths of Virtue, dread the Furies, which will certainly haunt them here in the form of a guilty conscience, and give them a sad foretaste of an unhappy Eternity.

THE FATES.

THESE were three Sisters, who disposed the Thread: Clotho held the Distaff; Lachesis spun, and Atropos cut off the Thread. The Fates seem to have been considered as having the greatest Influence over Human Life. However, Jupiter could check them, or give way to them, as he thought proper. The idea that Christians should entertain of Fate, is no other than that of the Government of the Supreme Being, whose Love created, and whose Will sustains, this Universe; and, leaving nothing to blind chance, disposes of all things according to his good pleasure.

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